

# APPENDIX A

## Homeland security chief says China, other countries block deportations

By Chris Strohm *CongressDaily* March 4, 2008

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff Tuesday said he wants to work with Congress on legislation that would place sanctions on countries that refuse to take back citizens who are in the United States illegally. Chertoff told the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Committee he would like to craft "alternative ways" to pressure countries to take back their citizens who the U.S. government is trying to deport because they entered the country illegally.

Sens. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and Ben Nelson, D-Neb., said one option would be to deny visas to citizens from countries causing the deportation problem. Specter said eight countries are refusing to accept a total of about 135,000 people who are in the United States illegally. He added that illegal immigrants who have served prison time for committing crimes cannot be held for more than an additional six months in detention facilities, meaning they are released inside the United States if they are not deported. Chertoff said the Chinese government is the worst at taking back its citizens and about 50,000 illegal immigrants are waiting to be returned to China.

Tuesday's hearing provided fresh evidence that Congress is shifting attention in this election year to efforts to track down and deport illegal immigrants who have committed crimes. For the last two years, lawmakers devoted considerable attention to beefing up U.S. border security to prevent people from entering the country illegally. But last week, members of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee said they wanted Immigration and Customs Enforcement to more quickly identify illegal immigrants within the prison population. Specter said Tuesday that a group of senators will introduce legislation Wednesday that would deal with enforcement of U.S. immigration laws and border security. Senate aides were unable to provide details about the legislation.

On other fronts, senators used the hearing to criticize parts of the Homeland Security Department's fiscal 2009 budget request. Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, said he is certain Senate appropriators will boost funding for state and local homeland security grant programs. He said the department is seeking about \$2 billion less in grant funding than Congress allocated for fiscal 2008. Chertoff said the request for grant funding is about equal to what the department sought for the current fiscal year.

"We've made some tough tradeoffs," he said. "But I do think we have built a disciplined and effective investment in our state and local governments totaling \$23 billion over the life of this department. That is a lot of money." Overall, Chertoff called the budget request sound and said he believes it allocates resources where they are most needed.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., said the department's so-called Real ID regulation placed an unfunded mandate on states. Under the regulation, states will be required to issue their residents secure driver's licenses and identification documents. Alexander said he plans to offer an amendment to the fiscal 2009 Homeland Security spending bill that would prohibit the department from implementing Real ID until the federal government covers all the costs associated with it. Homeland Security estimates that Real ID will cost about \$4 billion to implement.